

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

This application is directed to a send-reply label. The send-reply label generally comprises a label that may be printed upon, removed and adhered to a first object to be mailed, and an inner label thereafter removed and placed on a second object to be mailed such that a recipient of the first package or envelope can simply remove the inner label off the package and place it on a reply package or envelope for mailing.

Claims 1-29 are pending. All claims are variously rejected as anticipated and/or rendered obvious by Aoyagi (4,032,679), Stipek (3,914,483), DeMatte (5,985,424), Rawlings (6,170,879), and Garrison (5,328,538), in various combinations.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the Office Action which has been studied with interest and care.

By this Amendment, various claims have been amended to more clearly point out Applicants' most important contributions to the art; claims 3, 4, 9, 15, 16 and 20-27 have been canceled; and new claims 30-31 are presented.

II. CLAIM OBJECTIONS

A. Claim 1

Claim 1 is rejected as anticipated by Aoyagi (4,032,679) and as anticipated by Stipek (3,914,483). In response, Applicants have amended claim 1 to specify that the inner label or removable sub-label has mailing information printed on it, such that the facestock layer and release liner member may be adhered via the adhesive to a first object to be mailed to provide mailing information on the first object, and the removable sub-label thereafter may be removed from the release liner member and adhered to a second object to be mailed to provide mailing information for the second object. The claim as amended clearly distinguishes over the cited references.

Aoyagi discloses a set of circular stickers that have a round central portion and an angular outer portion, with the angular portion 21b being detached from the corresponding sticker 21a, with the angular pieces being used for a seal on packages of medicine and the like, (column 2,

lines 25-38), or to provide a circular opening seal for a can of “granular cleaner” (presumably, e.g., AJAX® cleanser) that can be repeatedly opened and closed (column 3, line 8). Aoyagi does not mention any uses for his circular stickers that relate in any way to mailing, or providing reusable mailing labels such as the unique and easy to use send-reply labels as claimed. Aoyagi therefore neither anticipates nor renders obvious claim 1 as amended.

Stipek discloses a roll of labels which can be used as coupons or decorative stickers, with the overall sticker being stuck on one object, and a number of different inner stickers with different artistic decorations thereon being removed and applied to an object to be decorated with the various decorative stickers. Stipek suggests that his structure would be particularly useful as coupons, or for labeling sub-parts of packages. (column 2, lines 49-53) Stipek neither discloses nor suggests that mailing information should be printed on the decorative stickers, or that the stickers could be used as send-reply labels. Stipek does not mention mailing or addressing anywhere in the patent.

Because neither of the references disclose nor suggest in any way the recited subject matter in claim 1 of “said removable sub-layer having mailing information printed thereon” to provide the unique send-reply functionality recited in claim 1, claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the prior art.

B. Claim 12

Claim 12 is rejected as anticipated by Aoyagi and as being further anticipated by Stipek.

Dependent claim 12 is a method claim which depends from claim 1, and recites the steps of “attaching the first removable label to said first object to be mailed; removing the at least one second removable label by removing at least a portion of the facestock layer and adhesive layer; and attaching the at least one second removable label to a second object to be mailed.” The method of using the send-reply label for providing both a send label and a reply label, with the reply label being removed from the send label and attached to a second object to be mailed, is neither disclosed or suggested by the references.

C. Claim 13

Claim 13 is rejected as anticipated by Stipek.

In response, claim 13 has been amended to specify that the inner label has mailing information printed thereon, similar to the amendment made to claim 1.

Stipek neither discloses nor suggest mailing information being printed on such a label. Accordingly, claim 13 as amended clearly and patentably defines over the cited prior art.

D. Claim 28

Claim 28 recites the multi-layer structure shown in Figure 6. Claim 28 has been amended similarly to claim 1, to specify that the inner label has mailing information printed thereon to provide the unique send-reply label and its novel and advantageous functionality that only the Applicants have taught.

E. Claim 30

New claim 30 is presented. Claim 30 is a method claim which recites the steps of providing a label having a structure similar to the structure recited in claim 1, and further performing the steps of "printing mailing information on said inner label; and removing said send label and adhering said send label to a first object to be mailed to provide said mailing information thereon." None of the cited references disclose nor suggest the claimed unique method of printing mailing information on an inner label on the structure recited, and adhering that send label to a first object to be mailed to provide the mailing information for it. Accordingly, new claim 30 patentably distinguishes over the cited art.

F. Claim 31

New claim 31 depends from claim 30 and adds the steps of "mailing said first object; removing said inner label of said send label from said first object, and adhering said inner label to a second object to be mailed to provide said mailing information thereon." This unique use of a double label having a removable inner label with mailing information printed there, to create a send label part of which can be removed after the first mailing for use as a reply label in a second mailing, is neither disclosed nor suggested by the references. Accordingly, claim 31 patentably distinguishes over the prior art.

G. Remaining Claims

All claims not specifically mentioned herein depend from independent claims discussed herein, and are allowable over the cited references for at least the reasons stated with respect to the independent claims.

CONCLUSIONS

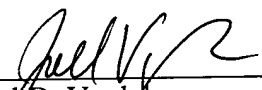
In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully urge that all of the claims of the application as currently presented patentably distinguish over the cited references and are in condition for immediately allowance. The undersigned attorney can be reached at 310-590-4528 to facilitate prosecution of this application, if necessary.

Respectfully submitted,

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